

can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? Was

it in order that you might have an opportunity of coming

up to town to see me as often as possible ?

*Jack.* Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?

*Gwendolen.* I have the gravest doubts upon the subject.

I intend to crush them. This is not the moment for German

scepticism. *{Moving to Cecily,}* Their explanations appear

to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing's. That

seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

*Cecily.* I am more than content with what Mr. Moncrieff said.

His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

*Gwendolen.* Then you think we should forgive them?

*Cecily.* Yes. I mean no.

*Gwendolen.* True! I had forgotten. There are principles at

stake that one cannot surrender. Which of us should tell

them? The task is not a pleasant one.

*Cecily.* Could we not both speak at the same time?

*Gwendolen.* An excellent idea! I nearly always speak at the

same time as other people. Will you take the time from me ?

*Cecily.* Certainly. *[Gwendolen beats time with uplifted finger.]*

*Gwendolen and Cecily. [Speaking together.]* Your Christian names

are still an insuperable barrier. That is all!

*Jack and Algernon. [Speaking together.]* Our Christian names!

Is that all ? But we are going to be christened this afternoon.

*Gwendolen. [To Jack.]* For my sake you are prepared to do

this terrible thing?

*Jack.* I am.

*Cecily. [To Algernon.]* To please me you are ready to face this

fearful ordeal?

*Algernon.* I am!

*Gwendolen.* How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes!

Where questions of self-sacrifice are concerned, men are

infinitely beyond us.

*Jack.* We are. *[Clasps hands with Algernon.]*

*Cecily.* They have moments of physical courage of which we

women know absolutely nothing.

*Gwendolen. [To Jack.]* Darling!

*Algernon. [To Cecily.]* Darling! *[They fall into each other's arms.]*

*Enter Merriman. When he enters he coughs loudly,*

*seeing the situation.*

*Merriman.* Ahem! Ahem! Lady Bracknell!

*Jack.* Good heavens!